

The Spiritualist,

AND JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE.

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CABINET SEANCES.

THE following letter appeared in last Monday's *Times* :—

To the Editor of "The Times."

SIR,—We think the following facts will be interesting to the readers of the *Times*. Some time ago, being desirous of investigating the truths of so-called Spiritualism, we were advised by an eminent Spiritualist to attend the séances held at 38, Great Russell-street (British National Association of Spiritualists). We were assured that the séances conducted at that association were the most genuine in England, and under strict test conditions. On our first visit, the medium being tied by one of us with great care, no manifestations followed. At the second visit (January 2nd) one of us again tied the medium, but under the directions of the chairman, who is officially connected with the institution. A "spirit" soon appeared, which we were told was "Marie," and was represented to be that of a dead child twelve years of age. She was dressed in white, her face covered with a veil, and her arms and feet bare. We were surprised to distinguish the appearance of a corset under the white robes, and her voice and general appearance gave us the idea that it was the medium herself, Mrs. Corner (*née* Florry Cook). On the third visit, January 9th, we were accompanied by a friend, Mr. John C. Fell, engineer, and editor of a scientific journal, of 23, Rood-lane, E.C., with his wife. The "spirit Marie" again appeared, and rendered our former suspicions almost certain by the audible sound of undressing within the curtain, and by the "unspiritual" levity of her behaviour and conversation. One of us by a sudden rush intercepted and gently held "the spirit," while another dashed into the curtains, and, drawing them aside, displayed the medium's empty chair with the knot slipped, her dress, stockings, and boots, and other discarded garments. There was sufficient light from a half-obscured candle for the captured "spirit" and all the above objects to be plainly seen, which latter were handed round for inspection and examined by those present. After a few minutes—to cover the confusion, we presume—the candle was extinguished by the official present, and we adjourned to the lower room. All present, except the officials, one of whom took refuge in abuse, entirely agreed with us and thanked us for exposing the deception.

Now, sir, we leave general conclusions on Spiritualism to others, but what we do claim to have proved is that in the first society of Spiritualists in England, one of its best mediums has been detected in personating the spirit herself. Not wishing to further occupy your valuable space, we shall be happy to give fuller information to any one interested in the cause of truth.

GEORGE R. SITWELL.
CARL VON BUCH.

Witness to the signatures of Sir George R. Sitwell and Carl von Bueh, F.C.S.:—John C. Fell, M.I.M.E., Professor of Mechanics.

23, Rood-lane, E.C., Jan. 10.

That an incident like the above should take place was a matter of certainty, and merely a question of time. Séances of the kind have long been thoroughly condemned by the more experienced Spiritualists, and results like the above foretold, as in the following leading article published by us rather more than two months ago (November 28th, 1879):—

A year or more ago, when it was discovered by experience that nearly all the public scandals brought down upon the movement in England and America were due to cabinet manifestations, those manifestations fell into disrepute, and were wisely almost abandoned by our best mediums. Mr. Williams and Mr. Eglington then discontinued cabinet séances to a large extent, and

almost always obtained their materialisations in open circles, off their own premises, and while their hands were held by the sitters next them. Under such conditions they are frequently able to obtain half-length materialised forms, which possess a power of flotation.

Recently a tendency has been evinced here and there in London and the provinces to return to some extent to cabinet séances, and with correspondingly evil results, for complaints are again flowing in to us in a private way as to the harm done to mediums and to the movement by cabinet manifestations, which, as a rule, convince new inquirers that what they see is imposture, and not unfrequently violently shake the confidence of those Spiritualists whose experience is limited.

There is reason for supposing that in the majority of cases, although not in all, the forms are nothing but the mediums in a state of trance, demonstrably freed from bonds by spirit power whenever the character of the medium has been protected from obloquy by himself and his friends, by the use at the beginning of the *séance* of bonds from which he cannot free himself by normal means. For scientific purposes, and in the presence only of Spiritualists who understand the subject, there is no harm in cabinet séances, which even then are useless unless held under stringent test conditions; but they should never, even in a small way, be brought before new inquirers, who should be introduced only to phenomena of a more convincing character, so easily obtainable through the same mediums.

At least five out of every six of the public troubles to Spiritualism in America have been due to cabinet séances; and after the way in which they were condemned for general purposes when the subject was fully considered in England, it is to be hoped that the apparent temporary revival of them may be checked. If attempted to be used for proselytising purposes they usually succeed in planting a rooted antipathy to Spiritualism in the minds of new inquirers, and sooner or later get the mediums and those who present them into trouble.

No words of warning could be plainer than those just quoted. Again, in *The Spiritualist* of Dec. 19th, 1879, only four weeks ago, we quoted an American case of the seizing of a medium dressed as a spirit, and put the following preface to it in large type:—

Cabinet séances, except when held under stringent test conditions, and preferably for purposes of scientific research, have long been condemned in England by those who know most about them, because of the injury they otherwise do to the medium, to the observers, and to the movement. Nine out of every ten of the greater public troubles which have afflicted Spiritualism in America have originated in cabinet séances, and if such had been condemned years ago in that country the movement would have now been in a much better position there. Good mediums can obtain excellent materialisation phenomena while they are held hand and foot in an open circle, off their own premises; so why should a cabinet be called into use? The following paragraph is going the rounds of the newspapers, and plenty more will follow, in relation to persons who tolerate cabinet séances; such séances drive away from Spiritualism at least ten out of every eleven sincere inquirers. They are of no use except to persons who know much about spiritual manifestations.

Under the old *regime*, at 38, Great Russell-street, form manifestations in public were discouraged, and the sale of tickets for séances to persons not Spiritualists was not permitted; but the system of management has been altered in several ways of late, and this week the whole movement is reaping some of the fruits thereof.

Form manifestations have been investigated for many years, and the general facts presented appear to be that at first spirit hands and heads are materialised, as at dark séances, while the mediums are held hand and foot, but that in cabinets the process is carried a stage farther, and full-length forms are produced. There seems to be no infraction of the law of the conservation of energy, and no creation of new matter; both the matter and the energy in these forms probably come from the mediums, as indicated

by the circumstance that the forms are more or less the duplicates of those of the mediums in external appearance, whatever may be the internal governing power, and that the vital energy of the medium is gradually exhausted by a materialisation séance. There being apparently no miracle in the shape of the creation of new matter, as materialised spirit hands, heads, and bodies grow heavier it follows that those of the mediums grow lighter, until at last there may be no medium at all inside the sealed tapes, however securely they had been applied, and nothing but a medium in a state of trance is then in the freed form. At the beginning of a séance this process is usually slow, occupying ten or twenty minutes; in the middle, when the "power" is at its highest, it takes place with marvellous rapidity. After a break in the middle of a séance, we have sometimes seen Mrs. Corner taped up in her chair and the knots sealed in a most scientific manner by one or other of the investigators, yet, during the very brief act of closing the door of the cabinet, the inquirer has been grasped by a long naked arm and hand coming from an aperture over the door of the cabinet high above Mrs. Corner's head. That hand and arm must have formed in one or two seconds, the time occupied in shutting the medium from view in closing the door. This would indicate that the interchange of matter between a medium in bonds and a form materialising outside them may take place with amazing rapidity, and as a new living being cannot be created by grasping one of these forms, there must then be sudden union of the forms inside and outside the cabinet. Thus, grasping one of the forms, and finding it to be the medium, proves nothing. On the other hand, if tests are badly applied, there may sometimes be imposture on the part of the mediums; and, which we believe to be much more common, there may sometimes be imposture on the part of the spirits, who perhaps find it easier to roll drapery round an entranced medium than to produce a genuine materialisation; the lower the spirit the greater is its direct control over common matter, and thus, although there are plenty of good spirits, some of the others are not at all above committing an act like that just described. It is very difficult to bring home proof of imposture against a medium who possesses genuine powers, because mediums are mesmeric sensitives, and at times as unconscious what their bodies are doing, as a boy on the platform of a mesmerist who is made to gnaw a raw cabbage, because the lecturer tells him that it is an apple. Were this not so there would have been occasional prosecutions of fraudulent mediums by Spiritualists, a line of action which would greatly benefit the movement; but as two or more intelligences can use the organism of a medium, the difficulty is to fix the moral responsibility of any particular act upon any particular individual.

Mrs. Corner has an old-established good character among Spiritualists, which will tell greatly in her favour among those who form opinions of the case now under notice. It would be interesting to know how she was tied last Friday, what was the condition of the tapes after the séance, and what became of the white drapery. Perhaps Mr. E. D. Rogers, who

was chairman on the occasion, can give the public some official information on this point.

These cabinet séances should be abandoned, except for purposes of scientific research among persons who understand the subject. They repel new investigators from the movement; they injure the reputations of the mediums; and have done infinite harm to Spiritualism in America, where, perhaps, more than a dozen such cases have been witnessed as that of last Friday.

After the foregoing comments had been put into type, we received the following letter, which was posted on Wednesday to *The Times* and other newspapers. The greater portion of it was proposed for adoption at the Council meeting last Tuesday by Mr. Stainton-Moses. A few alterations were made by the Council, after which the issuing of it to the press was authorised. During a part of the Council meeting Sir George Sitwell and Mr. Von Buch were present by invitation:—

THE CAPTURE OF "A SPIRIT."

To the Editor.

SIR,—I am directed by the Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists to address you in reference to a letter which has appeared in the public journals from Sir George Sitwell and Mr. Von Buch respecting a séance held on the 9th inst. at the rooms of the Association.

The letter of these gentlemen presents a substantially accurate account of what took place, except in the passages which attribute to members of the Council of the Association officially present a desire to cloak the truth, and to afford facilities for deception.

The Association, in seeking to fulfil the objects for which it was established, viz., to assist inquirers into the truths of Spiritualism, had thought that they would be rendering a public service by affording to members and their friends, unable or unwilling to devote the time needful for individual experiment, an opportunity of witnessing under favourable circumstances some of these phenomena; and they hoped that they had secured the best and most trustworthy means of so doing in engaging the services of Mrs. Corner, who, as Miss Florence Cook, was so completely and exhaustively tested by Mr. Crookes, F.R.S., and by many other competent investigators, including committees of this Association, in recent experiments.

Mr. Crookes's experiments extended over a series of years, and were conducted in his own house in the presence of his own family, under conditions that seemed to preclude deception. His precautions against error were, indeed, most elaborate, and his testimony as to what he proved is public property.

The Association was not unaware of the fact that the most intricate bonds do not prevent the liberation, by some means, of the medium. They knew, moreover—strange as the fact may appear to many of your readers—that perfectly unconscious persons can be, and frequently are, made to personate and act a part wholly irrespective of their own volition, just as the mesmeric sensitive obeys the suggestions of the mesmeriser. And they did not underestimate the extreme difficulty of presenting to uninstructed persons satisfactory results. They, however, deemed it their duty to make the attempt.

They can but regret that their well-intentioned efforts to this end should, in this case, have had results so unsatisfactory as those disclosed by the letter of Sir George Sitwell and Mr. Von Buch. I am directed to add the expression of extreme concern on the part of the Council of the Association if, in the heat of the moment, any expression should have been used of which those gentlemen consider that they have a right to complain.—I am, yours respectfully,

C. A. BURKE, Secretary.

38, Great Russell-street, Jan. 13.

In conclusion, Sir George Sitwell and Mr. Carl Von Buch, who appear to have acted with moderation throughout, may be deferentially asked what they mean by informing the editor of the *Times* and the British public that they heard an "audible sound." If this expression had the approval of their literary

friend, the scientific engineer, one would expect to find much in his newspaper about boiling wet water with hot fire.

Correspondence.

[Great freedom is given to correspondents, who sometimes express opinions diametrically opposed to those of this journal and its readers. Unsolicited communications cannot be returned; copies should be kept by the writers. Preference is given to letters which are not anonymous.]

ANÆSTHETICS.

SIR,—Doubtless the artificial production of states resembling natural or mesmeric trance would afford opportunities for important research, but your suggestive article proposing the use of anæsthetics for this purpose, and advising their experimental employment, is liable to be seriously misunderstood. The effects of chloroform, ether, &c., strikingly resemble certain forms of spontaneous psychical conditions, involving, however, as you justly indicate, the greatest risks, but unfortunately circumstances attending the administration of nitrous oxide gas, as ordinarily given, also entirely preclude its suggested use. Unlike other similar agents it must be without atmospheric admixture, pure, and as its physiological effect is attended with real asphyxia, its exhibition can be but brief, and its direct effect momentary. Instead of producing a "surplusage of oxygen in the blood," its action is quite the reverse, no free, active oxygen being contained as in the atmospheric mixture; and the condition of impending suffocation produced, with but a brief abnormal state, is too entirely different from that required to admit of either comparison or similar investigation. A safe, practical anæsthetic has yet to be found, though a small admixture of pure oxygen with nitrous oxide, which must then be given under increased atmospheric pressure, involving great experimental difficulties, permits of prolonged exhibition, with freedom from certain embarrassments, and probably danger.

WALTER H. COFFIN.

Junior Athenaeum Club, Piccadilly, W., Jan. 10, 1880.

DR. MONCK.

SIR,—I propose holding a séance with M. J. C. Husk (physical medium) on Wednesday evening, the 28th inst., in aid of the fund now being raised for Dr. Monck. I shall not only feel very pleased to see any of our mutual friends, but very glad if those who find themselves unable to attend the séance will kindly forward me such sums (however small they may be) as they may desire to contribute.

The names, which have already appeared, of the contributors to this fund—names both distinguished and honourable—should sufficiently testify to the estimation placed upon Dr. Monck and his most useful work of healthier days. It would not only be a precious balm to a suffering man, who has always held the truth nearest his heart, and laboured to establish it, but a protest against the false imputations of his and their enemies, if mediums all over the country would contribute to this fund in whatever way open to them. Of those who may not be able to do otherwise, I would solicit contributions to my séance. They will thus testify anew to that truth for which a brother has suffered, and enter a powerful protest against the calumnies of his persecutors.

The proceeds of the séance will be duly published.

C. WOODFORDE.

90, Great Russell-street, London, January 8th, 1880.

HERR CHRISTIAN REIMERS, who has devoted much of his time for a few years to the experimental and observational study of Spiritualism, and who has given the results freely to the public, is about to resume his profession as a teacher of music, from which he has long been debarred by a nervous affliction. His address is 6, Manor Villas, Richmond, Surrey.

"PASSED TO THE HIGHER LIFE."—Deaths have been numerous of late in the ranks of veteran Spiritualists. The Baroness Paolina Kirkup writes to us from Leghorn that her husband, Baron Seymour Stoker-Kirkup, passed away on the third of this month. He was one of the foremost Spiritualists on the Continent, and his testimony as to the reality of certain of the phenomena has been published occasionally in these pages. Madame Gustave de Veh passed to the higher life a short time ago, and M. de Veh has until now suffered severely from the shock. Both have long been known as warm and true friends of Spiritualism.

MEDIUMS AND MEDIUMSHIP.

LAST Monday night, at a well-attended meeting of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, 53, Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, Mr. W. Eglinton, the medium, read the following paper upon "Mediums and Mediumship." The Rev. W. Miall presided.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—In choosing the subject of "Mediums and Mediumship" for my paper, I had in mind my somewhat extended experience, and felt more confident that I could better give a decided opinion in regard to it than I could to anything else which pertains to our movement. But, independently of any opinion or experience of my own, the subject of "Mediumship and Mediums" is one of the most important which could be considered by the movement at large; that is to say, if we as Spiritualists desire to place our cause on a footing which, by its sound constitution and basis, shall establish it above attacks from the world at large. This I think all *true* Spiritualists desire, and it is why I say that mediumship is the most important subject the movement should be called upon to consider, and that I ask you, as a humble worker in your midst, to place the mediums where they should be—in their right place in our ranks. However much some so-called Spiritualists may deny it, it is none the less a fact that a medium stands in very much the same position to our cause as does the pilot to a ship in dangerous waters. The analogy, I think, is not so widely different, because, as the pilot is necessary to the safety and success of our commerce by sea, so is a medium indispensable to the success of our cause. Spiritualism may have a philosophy, and a beautiful one it would be, no doubt, if rightly considered and taught; but as no organisation has ever been made to place the philosophy in any favourable light before the public, so as to gain adherents without the manifestations, it is plain, then, that a medium is the mainspring and support of the whole movement. Mediumship of to-day is, perhaps, the influx of a genius as great, if not greater, than was ever before evidenced in the world's history. It came to the people of the nineteenth century as a light in the darkness, the herald of a new truth. I do not feel, in the light of all that has been accomplished during the past thirty years, that I shall be considered at all extravagant if I say that, thirty years ago, in the hands of a few unlettered and inexperienced people, called mediums, depended the fate of a nation, if not a world's progress. Simultaneously with the first medial expression which heralded the advent of modern Spiritualism, came a wave of advanced thought that has plainly and unmistakably marked itself in every detail of modern life. Valuable discoveries and liberal sentiment have followed every new development of mediumship in modern Spiritualism.

Who and what are mediums? Thirty years ago, in a little almost undiscovered town, the first tiny rap was heard, which, increasing in power, soon became recognised in all quarters of the habitable globe, and led to the development of that peculiarly offensive and modern body called "mediums." These

raps a man of mark has called, and very justly so, I think, the "alphabet of immortality." One would have supposed the most intellectual people would have been chosen to place so startling a truth before the world in its best light. In many private circles this was the case; but the spirit-world seemed to choose as best adapted to do this work, those who were born in the humble sphere of life, probably knowing that in the age in which we live self-sacrifice would be so small on the part of those who have material means at their command, that those only without adequate opportunities of keeping themselves were chosen for the spirits' mission. And how were these mediums and their mediumship received when their marvellous power first became known to the world? The people were as unreasonable in their treatment of them as they were afterwards unjust. Mediums were simply perfection—good, wise, and moral: all words spoken through them being infallible, and, for the time being, they were worshipped. Every fault which they evinced was credited to bad spirits, and the good traits accounted for by the presence of good guardians! In those days the perfection of belief in both spirits and mediums may be best shown by the fact that the sitters at one circle were actually sent for skunk's grease to better the manifestations! and I have it on good authority that this whimsical nonsense was actually complied with. Any one knowing anything of skunks and spiritual conditions, will best understand *how* the two could agree. While this is very ridiculous, have we not examples correspondingly ridiculous inside the Catholic Church? Far be it from me to underrate the religious devotion and enthusiasm of any class of religionists; but to those who believe in works instead of words, and example more than precept, the wearing of hair shirts, pebbles in one's stocking, or the hair cut so close to one's head that it is absolutely painful, is quite as nonsensical as being sent by spirits to search for skunk's grease as an auxiliary to spiritual manifestations. As time rolled on, and as people investigated more clearly, they fortunately found out their mistake. As one extreme always follows another, the mediums, instead of remaining on a pedestal, were correspondingly reduced. The tide then turned against them. From being wholesale and perfect believers in all purporting to come from the spiritual word, the majority of Spiritualists turned into critical investigators, and received every word and manifestation with suspicion. So strongly was this marked, that for a medium to sit in a circle in those days was simply impossible. Seeds of doubt and distrust always bring forth unripe fruit. In the midst of this atmosphere, what wonder that mediums, instead of reaching the position for which they were at first destined, took their naturally appointed place with the rest of human beings; for be it understood that mediums do eat and drink. Unfortunately, on New Year's Day the same material requirements of mediums are evidenced, and grocers and bakers have to be patronised by them as well as by the rest of God's children. Between these two extremes, what position do mediums occupy at the present day? Unfortunately, the aim of many, and perhaps justly so, is to use the great gift which has been placed in

their keeping for personal glory and gain. It is only in a very small minority of cases that a man or a woman steps out into the world, and sacrifices himself to use his best gifts for the sake of the people in it. Possibly the reason may be that the mediums have not yet fully realised the real divinity of their mission; and possibly it is that instances of self-sacrifice and self-surrender have been too rare among all the artists of the world to have been readily imitated. Have any of our great men gone into the world as our mediums have done, without money and without price? Perhaps the greatest misfortune which could have come to Spiritualists, and certainly to mediums, is the apparent dishonesty pervading their ranks. Far be it from me to deny or gloss over the real dishonesty of many professing to be mediums, but lacking the real genius; and others possessing the real genius, but lacking the moral courage to be at all times, and at whatever sacrifice, true to the high gifts entrusted to their keeping. Another charge, and perhaps a just one, reflects upon the moral character and standing of mediums. Again I am obliged to say that in some instances this may be true. Perhaps there is one item of credit to be attached to mediums in the midst of all this blame, and that is that their faults, although they may be many, are upon the surface. As a class, they either lack the policy or the hypocrisy to conceal their sins: consequently, standing as they do with all their weaknesses fully revealed, they present a much more hideous appearance in society than many worse men, who are simply content with presenting a moral exterior, while the inner fabric of their moral nature may be pierced with many rents. Granted the assumption that mediums, as a class, are more immoral than any other class in society, are there not many reasons why they should be so, aside from the theory of natural depravity? In the first place, mediums are subjected to temptations of a quantity and quality that the unmediumistic can never conceive; secondly, by nature they are as open to temptation as to spiritual impressions, and, as a result, the fall of mediums is due more to exterior conditions than to any interior weakness. "But how," asks the intelligent Spiritualist, "can the frequent exposures among even our best mediums be accounted for? In the religious world, or in any other movement outside Spiritualism, if a man is once found deceiving he is considered for ever after untrustworthy. Why should not the same rule apply to mediums?" Genuine impostures are as true as genuine manifestations. Now why is all this? Of course mediums are not infallible. There was a Judas among the olden twelve, and it is not unlikely that that Judas is among the apostles of the new faith. But what is the attitude of Spiritualists towards mediums? What have they, as a body, done to remedy this existing evil? In other movements each representative of art, science, or religion has previously been trained, educated, and qualified for the position he has assumed or occupies. Every clergyman is first tutored for his future office. Institutions of education to promote the propagation of every subject pertaining to the welfare of the human race are open for his instruction, and, when properly qualified, his work is

concisely marked out for him, and representative men and women stand as his supporters. How is it with mediums? A person, perhaps entirely unlettered and inexperienced, is chosen from the ranks of the people to occupy a far greater position of trust and honour than that occupied by any clergyman of the present day; and, instead of having a class of representative men and women to support and assist him, the ordinary medium is surrounded by a class of marvel-hunters, with now and then one or two true and faithful souls, from whom alone he derives courage and support. Mediumship has never yet been placed upon its merits, neither have mediums ever occupied their true position, either in society or among Spiritualists.

Now, the medium is investigated instead of his mediumship, and the strength of ropes, tapes, and sealing-wax is tested instead of the spirits. Mediums of to-day are the inspired children of the movement; and until they have better parents, truer guardians, and nobler examples placed before them, the great human cry of humbug, imposture, and immorality among mediums will never be silenced. The majority of Spiritualists now look upon mediums more as "thieves of the night," ordinary jugglers, and people whose only intent is to deceive and delude, when as children, subject only to the same weaknesses as ordinary mortals, their real desire is, to the best of their ability, to express or develop a gift, the magnitude and power of which they themselves as yet neither understand nor appreciate. Not until Spiritualists, as Spiritualists, look upon mediumship as the only channel through which they can obtain certain proof of a continued and higher existence, and not until they regard mediums, frail, weak, and human as they are, as the only instruments through which God at present can reveal His will unto the people, will the proper attitude be manifested by Spiritualists towards them, and the fruitful results of mediumship be revealed. Every medium should understand that the cause is always first, and *he* afterward. He should understand the duties of his position so well that it is neither necessary nor possible for a sceptic to dictate to him what the spirits shall do through his mediumship, or how they are to do it.

Perhaps at this juncture it may not be inopportune for me to cite a little personal experience that will be at once laughable and possibly valuable. I am presented to a company as a medium, and I am kindly asked by the hostess how I should best like to sit. Should there by chance be sceptics in the room, it is at once assumed that the persons of my choice, whom I select to sit next me, are my confederates; therefore no other course is left me but to answer the question by "Wherever you will." Naturally the person to whom I give a *séance* is pleased to put me between the two greatest sceptics in the room. The places are occupied, and then comes an injunction from the host or hostess to the two sceptics to be "sure that you hold the medium's hands tightly." After he has been made as uncomfortable as human ingenuity can possibly devise, the *séance* begins. The initiative proceedings are perhaps a few raps. The hostess cries out, "Joey, are you here?" Three raps, signifying "yes." "Are we going to have a

good séance?" Two raps—the dubious "Don't know." "Oh, dear! there must be some bad spirit present—that is never 'Joey!'" Three raps follow this assertion, assuring the hostess and the company present that it is really "Joey," and unassisted by any evil spirits. The raps cease, and the deep, sonorous voice of "Ernest" comes for a moment in the midst of this, saying, "Good evening, friends; God bless you all!" Of course it is not expected that strangers to "Ernest," or even those knowing him but little, can understand how much of peace and truth and hearty good will is conveyed in his simple "God bless you!" But I, who have so long known his unfailing fidelity, am at once assured that whatever the people may be at this side of the séance, the workmen in the spiritual séance are well governed and truly directed. The séance proceeds; the sceptics clutch harder, probably unconscious that mediums are made of ordinary flesh and blood, and one asks, "Is there any spirit here who can tell me how many shillings I have in my pocket?" "Joey's" voice instantly replies, "No; we are not particularly interested in your financial affairs." "Well, then," replies the sitter, "perhaps you can tell me where I bought my umbrella?" Alas for poor, ignorant "Joey," he does not even know that! To lengthen these details would simply be to give a complete history of the séance, lasting, perhaps, for two hours. Part of the sitters at the close vote it a success, part a failure, and the whole combined means, "I wonder why exalted spirits never manifest at dark séances?" Could their eyes have been spiritually opened, as mine were during the whole of the séance, they would have seen that high and exalted spirits felt that they had better business to do than telling the number of shillings in a man's pocket, or finding out where he bought his umbrella. Doubt and suspicion thrown upon a medium are the surest means of prevention of powerful spiritual manifestations. Every medium should be surrounded by an influence of trust, respect, and appreciation, not because he is a medium, but that all the elements which attract undeveloped influences may be entirely eliminated from the séance room, and that in higher influences the medium may find not only rest and support, but a proper understanding of his medial strength, and the desires of his controls. Nothing is more important than that the medium should be, for the time being, master of the situation, for it is as impossible for the uninitiated to impose secure conditions, by which the best manifestations may be obtained, as for a street minstrel to have instructed Mendelssohn in music. Under these conditions, it is quite possible that fewer converts will be made to Spiritualism; but it is equally true that those so convinced will be more trustworthy, more intelligent, and more beneficial to the cause.

And here let me tell you of a séance held under the above-mentioned higher conditions—one of the most beautiful it has ever been my lot either to induce or attend. It was on New Year's Eve, 1878, and the meeting took place at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory. There were eight or ten persons present, some of whom I see here to-night. After the usual dark séance manifestations, which upon this occasion were more powerful and instructive than usual, I entered the cabinet. I

wish to strongly impress upon your minds that the séance which I am now relating was a most unusual one, due, I firmly believe, to the fact of my having given many séances at the same house, and to the friendship, trust, and appreciation with which every sitter regarded me. Of course, what occurred during the materialisations was related to me afterwards by the sitters present, as, unfortunately, during these manifestations I am kept in a deep trance. The gas was turned on until the room was pervaded by a dim, religious light, when slowly the curtains opened, and from the cabinet came one dearly loved, long known, and always treasured by the hostess, Lady G—, widow of the late Field Marshal Sir —. The form was no dummy dressed up to represent life, nor Mr. Eglinton transfigured, which will be best evidenced by Mrs. Gregory's own words:—

"I have no hesitation in giving my testimony to the wonderful power and satisfactory nature of your mediumship. Indeed, I personally, have never seen it surpassed. I, with many others, have scrutinised it carefully when it occurred in my house, and we have all been satisfied with its truth. Seven different times my friend Lady G— appeared to me fully materialised, when you were lying apparently in a trance on my sofa in the drawing-room, visible to five or six of my friends who were with me at the time. Your sincere friend, LISETTE MAKDOUGALL GREGORY."

What could be more beautifully impressive than this midnight scene on New Year's night? The spirit, after requesting cake and wine to be brought, tasted the cake, touched the wine, and then handed it to each of the sitters, that they might partake of this holy communion with her. After this the persons present were requested to kneel, and, in their midst, the spirit knelt also, and pouring forth a solemn invocation, asked that Almighty God would bless each friend present, and make their New Year one long to be remembered, and then vanished. When the influence had left me, and I found myself fully conscious, I was persuaded the séance had been a failure, so rested and peaceful was my condition; and not until I saw the tear-wet eyes of my friends, and received their grateful messages of thanks, did I fully understand this memorable event. The majority of Spiritualists of to-day are defending the world against mediums, rather than supporting mediums against the world. I would not have you for one moment suppose that I would advocate the concealment of dishonesty, or the protection of mediums when they are really wrong; but I would advocate that every Spiritualist should be perfectly certain that the medium *is* wrong before he is publicly denounced and sent out into the world branded and disgraced. The point I wish to impress upon your minds is that without mediums you are without Spiritualism, and until the proper relationship is established between mediums and Spiritualists, Spiritualism will make no progress, and sink into a dark state from which nothing but the truest mediumship can rescue it. The suffering of any particular medium is of very small importance. Every new truth has had its martyrs. Spiritualism must have its; but I would that some method could be devised whereby mediums would suffer as

little as possible, and the world learn to the fullest extent the depth and power of the truth and beauty of our philosophy.

My experience has been varied and extensive. I know something of the pain and persecution, and a little of the joy, which good, true work always brings to the labourer in an unpopular cause; and knowing all this, the greatest pain I experience is in feeling that through an improper or partial understanding, the true merits of mediumship, and the proper relationship to be sustained between mediums and Spiritualists, the best work of the century should be dimmed and retarded. As the nineteenth century is the century of inventions, so is the twentieth destined to be a century of seers; and the destiny of those seers is, to a large extent, in the keeping of modern Spiritualists and Spiritualism.

"God sends His teachers into every clime,
To every race and every class of men."

The mediums of the nineteenth century are essentially its teachers; and if I have succeeded in showing as plainly as possible that the present relations between mediums and Spiritualists are to a large extent wrong, I feel that you will all take to heart the injunction of Plutarch that "the moment you have discovered a wrong, it is the time to mend it."

After the reading of this paper several speakers addressed the meeting. The chairman, the Rev. W. Miall, said that Mr. Eglinton had asserted the great superiority of mediums to parsons; as he (Mr. Miall) was a kind of parson he felt sensitive on the point, and thought that Mr. Eglinton might have quoted the text, "I magnify mine office." Such were the words of St. Paul. Mr. Eglinton would have done quite right to quote them.—Mr. Emms thought that more *séances* in the light would be of great advantage to the movement; and Mr. C. E. Williams that new mediums should be developed for light *séances*.

VISIONS IN CRYSTALS.

To the Editor of "The Spiritualist."

THINKING this would be of some interest to your readers I enclose it to you. MARY J. BILLING.

An adept of Cagliostro consulted by Madame Josephine de Beauharnois, in the prison of Des Carmes, as to the fate of her husband.

Terror and tyranny usurping more and more the place of liberty, the Viscount de Beauharnois was exiled to a distance of some twenty leagues beyond the frontier, and retired to *Ferté Imbault* of the Beauharnois estate.

Assailed in his retreat by the calumnious denunciations of his enemies, he was arrested and transferred to Paris, where he was confined in the prison of *Des Carmes*.

Arrested at the same time as her husband, separated from her two children, Madame de Beauharnois awaited death in tearful anxiety.

Having no news of the unfortunate general, Josephine agreed to the proposition of a gaoler that she should consult an adept of Cagliostro, the most celebrated representative of *la secte Balsamite*.

Misfortune had rendered her superstitious, and she would have given all in the world to know the fate reserved for her husband.

Cagliostro's adept was Mons. Duvivier, detained in the prison of *Des Carmes*. The process pursued by the *secte Balsamite* consisted in placing a pupil or

girl, that is to say, a young girl at the age of innocence, before a crystal vase filled with pure water. By the imposition of the hands of the operator, or Grand Cophté, she acquired the faculty of entering into communication with the genii of the middle region (in other words, spirits), and saw in the water all which could interest the person in the name of whom the divinatory operation was performed.

Mons. Duvivier was very willing to operate in the name of Madame de Beauharnois, whose husband had appeared the previous evening before the revolutionary tribunal. It was in the middle of the night. A little girl in the gaol was awakened, and for some small payment the father of the child made all the necessary preparations. A table was laid out with a decanter of water, and three lighted candles disposed in the form of a triangle.

The Grand Cophté held his hands on the head of the pupil, who had her eyes fixed upon the decanter. After remaining for some few minutes in profound meditation, during which he concentrated his thoughts upon the Viscount de Beauharnois, Mons. Duvivier said to the young girl: "See!"

There was profound silence. The Grand Cophté asked of the girl: "What do you see?" The young girl replied, with a sorrowful expression: "I see in a little room a young man who sleeps alongside of a man who writes upon a paper." "Can you read?" "Oh, no, citizen." "And what next?" "Ah! ah! there he is cutting off his hair, and he puts it in a paper." "The one who sleeps?" "Certainly not; he who wrote just now. Now he writes on the paper where he has placed the hair. He opens a little red portfolio; he counts the bills therein; he rises; he goes very softly." "How, very softly? Until this moment you have not been able to hear any noise?" "Very softly, because he has the art of walking on the tips of his toes." "But what did he do with the portfolio?" "He placed it in the pocket of a coat belonging to the man who sleeps." "Of what colour is the coat?" "I do not know the name of that colour, but it is lined with blue silk, with bright buttons." "That is enough."

The Grande Cophté here breathed upon the forehead of the girl, and dismissed her. Then turning to his assistants, "General de Beauharnois still exists," said he; "but all these dispositions presage an approaching execution. It is of no use announcing this to his poor wife; she will learn it all too speedily. I will tell her simply that her husband still lived two hours after midnight."

Monsieur de Beauharnois was guillotined on the 20th of July, 1794, and several days later Josephine showed her companions in captivity a letter which her husband had written on the night preceding his death.

She was at first inconsolable; but after a time, thanks to the friendship of two women imprisoned with her, she began to be reconciled to life again. One of these ladies was Madame Aiguillon, of illustrious name; the other was the beautiful Thérèse Cabarrus (Madame Tallien).

After her confinement for eighteen months in the prison of *Des Carmes*, Madame de Beauharnois fell seriously ill when her sentence of death was notified to her; but the 9th of August (Thermidor) saw her happily released from her sufferings.

AN ANTIQUARY'S GHOST STORY.*

BY AUGUSTUS JESSOP, D.D.

LITTLE more than two months have passed since my own personal experience of mental phenomena was strikingly enlarged by the occurrence with which the following narrative deals. Yet already I find that round the original story there has gathered a surprising accumulation of the mythical element, and that I myself am in danger of becoming a hero of romance in more senses than one. As I object to be looked upon as a kind of medium to whom supernatural visitations are vouchsafed, and, on the other hand, do not wish to be set down as a crazy dreamer whose disorganised nervous system renders him abnormally liable to fantastic delusions, I have yielded to the earnest request of some who have begged me to make public the following paper. I am told that there are those who busy themselves in collecting similar stories, and if it be so, it is better they should hear the facts from me than after they have passed through other channels. The narrative was written, at the request of a friend, not many days after the event, when all the circumstances were fresh in my recollection.

On the 10th of October, 1879, I drove over from Norwich to Mannington Hall to spend the night at Lord Orford's. Though I was in perfect health and high spirits, it is fair to state that, for some weeks previously, I had had a great deal to think about, some little anxiety, and some considerable mental strain of one kind or another. I was not, however, conscious of anything approaching weariness, irritability, or "fag." I arrived at 4 p.m., and was engaged in pleasant and animated conversation till it was time to dress for dinner. We dined at seven; our party numbered six persons. Of these, four, at least, had been great travellers. I myself was rather a listener; the talk was general and discursive, and amused and interested me greatly. Not for a single moment did it turn upon the supernatural; it was chiefly concerned with questions of art and the experiences of men who had seen a great deal of the world, and could describe intelligently what they had seen, and comment upon it suggestively. I have very rarely been at a more pleasant party. After dinner we played a rubber. We "left off as we began," and as two of the guests had some distance to drive we broke up at half-past ten.

The main object of my going over to Mannington was to examine and take notes upon some very rare books in Lord Orford's library, which I had been anxiously wishing to get a sight of for some years, but had never been fortunate enough to meet with up to this time. I asked leave to sit up for some hours and make transcripts. His lordship at first wished me to let his valet remain in attendance to see all lights put out, but as this would have embarrassed me and compelled me to go to bed earlier than I wished, and as it seemed likely that I should be occupied till two or three in the morning, it was agreed that I should be left to my own devices and the servants should be allowed to retire. By eleven o'clock I was the only person downstairs, and I was very soon busily at work and absorbed in my occupation.

The room in which I was writing is a large one, with a huge fireplace and a grand old chimney; and it is needless to say that it is furnished with every comfort and luxury. The library opens into this room, and I had to pass out from where I was sitting into this library and get upon a chair to reach the volumes I wanted to examine. There were six small volumes in all. I took them down and placed them at my right hand in a little pile, and set to work—sometimes reading, sometimes writing. As I finished with a book I placed it in front of me. There were four silver candlesticks upon the table, the candles all burning, and, as I am a chilly person, I sat myself at one corner of the table with the fire at my left, and at intervals, as I had finished with a book, I rose, knocked the fire together, and stood up to warm my feet. I continued in this way at my task till nearly one o'clock. I had got on better than I expected, and I had only one more book to occupy me. I rose, wound up my watch, and opened a bottle of seltzer water, and I remember thinking to myself that I should get to bed by two after all. I set to work at the last little book. I had been engaged upon it about half an hour, and was just beginning to think that my work was drawing to a close, when, as I was actually writing, I saw a large white hand within a foot of my elbow. Turning my head, there sat a figure of a somewhat large man, with his back to the fire, bending slightly over the table, and apparently examining the pile of books that I had been at work upon. The man's face was turned away from me, but I saw his closely-cut reddish-brown hair, his ear and shaved cheek, the eyebrow, the corner of the right eye, the side of the forehead, and the large high cheek-bone. He was dressed in what I can only describe as a kind of ecclesiastical habit of thick corded silk, or some such material, close up to the throat, and a narrow rim or edging, of about an inch broad, of satin or velvet serving as a stand-up collar, and fitting close to the chin. The right hand, which had first attracted my attention, was clasping, without any great pressure, the left hand; both hands were in perfect repose, and the large blue veins of the right hand were conspicuous. I remember thinking that the hand was like the hand of Velasquez's magnificent "Dead Night" in the National Gallery. I looked at my visitor for some seconds, and was perfectly sure that he was not a reality. A thousand thoughts came crowding upon me, but not the least feeling of alarm, or even uneasiness; curiosity and a strong interest were uppermost. For an instant I felt eager to make a sketch of my friend, and I looked at a tray on my right for a pencil; then I thought, "Upstairs I have a sketch-book—shall I fetch it?" There he sat, and I was fascinated; afraid, not of his staying, *but lest he should go*. Stopping in my writing, I lifted my left hand from the paper, stretched it out to the pile of books, and moved the top one. I cannot explain why I did this—my arm passed in front of the figure, and it vanished. I was simply disappointed, and nothing more. I went on with my writing as if nothing had happened, perhaps for another five minutes, and I had actually got to the last few words of what I had determined to extract, when the figure

* We quote this narrative from last week's *Athenaeum*.—Ed. of S.

appeared again, exactly in the same place and attitude as before. I saw the hands close to my own : I turned my head again, to examine him more closely, and I was framing a sentence to address to him, when I discovered that I did not dare to speak. *I was afraid of the sound of my own voice.* There he sat, and there sat I. I turned my head again to my work, and finished writing the two or three words I still had to write. The paper and my notes are at this moment before me, and exhibit not the slightest tremor or nervousness. I could point out the words I was writing when the phantom came and when he disappeared. Having finished my task, I shut the book and threw it on the table; it made a slight noise as it fell—the figure vanished.

Throwing myself back in my chair, I sat for some seconds looking at the fire with a curious mixture of feeling, and I remember wondering whether my friend would come again, and if he did whether he would hide the fire from me. Then first there stole upon me a dread and a suspicion that I was beginning to lose my nerve. I remember yawning; then I rose, lit my bedroom candle, took my books into the inner library, mounted the chair as before, and replaced five of the volumes; the sixth I brought back and laid upon the table where I had been writing when the phantom did me the honour to appear to me. By this time I had lost all sense of uneasiness. I blew out the four candles and marched off to bed, where I slept the sleep of the just or the guilty; I know not which, but I slept very soundly.

This is a simple and unvarnished narrative of facts. Explanation, theory, or inference I leave to others.

HOW BEST TO BECOME A THEOSOPHIST.*

BY GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS THEOSOPHISTS,—In addressing you I feel deeply impressed with the importance of the question I now put to you—How best to become a theosophist?

As a preliminary observation, I need scarcely remind you that all who aspire to become theosophists pledge themselves to live a pure, simple, temperate, and self-denying life, and with brotherly and sisterly love.

Theosophy means the science of the wisdom of God. But who is there among us who shall presume to dogmatise on a science beyond the comprehension of the human mind? for “who can by searching find out God? or who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?”

All we can do is to conceive in our minds an idea in harmony with our highest inspirations, and in doing so we shall accept of the axiom of the initiated King of Israel, when he said, “The awe of God is the beginning of wisdom.”

Let us here recall the definition of our position as laid down in the rules of our society, which read thus:—

“The British Theosophical Society is founded for the purpose of discovering the nature and powers of the human soul and spirit by investigation and experiment.

“ Our object is to increase the amount of human health, happiness, knowledge, wisdom, and goodness; and we pledge ourselves, to the best of our powers, to live a life of truth, temperance, purity, and brotherly love.

“ We believe in a great first intelligent Cause, and in the Divine sonship of the spirit of man, and hence in the immortality of that spirit, and in the universal brotherhood of the human race.”

This is truly a holy and sublime programme, and the question which should present itself for our continual consideration is, “ How best shall we carry out these rules, and thus become theosophists ? ”

In endeavouring to arrive at the best method, I shall do my best to present all sides of the question with fairness and submission; and if I fail to point out the truest method, or, in your opinion, underestimate any method, or over-estimate any other method, it will be for you to exercise your reason, and in a brotherly and sisterly way point out the defects. This, I beg to say once for all, that you cannot confer a greater favour than by, now and at all times, pointing out any defect in manner, matter, or thought, which you may discover in your president; and if you promise to show me this kindness, I will now frankly promise in return to render you a like service, for thus we shall “ bear each other’s infirmities,” and thus fulfil one of the highest laws.

I feel how unworthy I am to occupy the position you have placed me in, but in all I say I shall endeavour to speak in the spirit so sublimely expressed by one of the most intensely true and loving of men, himself apparently an initiate, and at least illuminated with that knowledge without which there can be no comprehension of theosophy—the triple nature of man as body, soul, and spirit. This Paul of Tarsus says, when writing to those of his society then residing in the city of Corinth:—

“ Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; and although I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and although I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing; and although I give all my goods to feed the poor, and although I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

This magnificent picture of charity or love cannot be surpassed in nobleness of expression, and I submit that our society could not do better than write it up as our initiatory rule of life.

We all, I understand, fully realise the trinity in man of body, soul, and spirit; and thus it is that our rules indicate that we shall do our best to increase our bodily health, our souls’ strength and purity, and the exaltation of the spirit; and we all, I think, thus understand that the central essence of all true religion is one and identical, namely, *to evoke the hidden spiritual centre of the soul, and unite that with God.*

We see this, and thus also we are able to see, that just in proportion as we descend from this sublime standpoint, and attempt to formulate our belief by symbols, or by a ritual, we encounter the danger of more or less worshipping the creature in the place of the Creator; and of descending into idolatry, dogmatism, sectarianism, and intolerance.

* Presidential address delivered before the British Theosophical Society, January 6th, 1880.

This, I think, all theosophists will admit; and yet the human mind, so long at least as it is united to the body, demands something more tangible, and more lovable, and more capable of application to daily life than is found in the sublime but abstract and incomprehensible idea of a central spiritual essence.

Hence religion, although its essential meaning is *religio*, to rebind, that is, to rebind the spirit of man with the Spirit of God, has, in harmony with human nature, been formulated as the Spirit of the *Son* seeking the Spirit of the *Father*. And thus in all nations, and in all ages of the world, religion has attempted to concrete itself, and in doing so, and in attempting to realise the Divine Mind, has worshipped that idea as exhibited in or by the advent from time to time of Avatars, or manifestations of the Logos or Wisdom, or Spirit of God, in Divine and miraculous men.

Hence we have Gautama Buddha in the East and Jesus Christ in the West, who, esoterically considered, may be said to teach the one great law of religion, namely, that man can only know the Divine by evoking the gift of God, the Divine light which lies *latent* within him, and by which light only he can know his Father, and thus return to the bosom of his God.

But although it may in a sense be said that these two esoterically considered are one, yet each would seem to have been moulded in body, soul, and spirit, in harmony with the physical aspects of Nature, as existing on that part of our planet on which he appeared.

In the East we find a hot atmosphere, a luxurious vegetation, and stupendous mountains; and the form the religion takes is that of power, subtlety, contemplation, stillness, repose, rest, sleep, and entrance-ment; and the ascetic life, with its diet of fruits, vegetables, and cereals, and its soul-power, entrance-ment, and magic.

In the West, on the other hand, we find a more temperate climate and a more active life—a bigger brain and a manifestation of a wider range of the intellectual and practical life; and while we find the same prayer and contemplation and sacrifice of the bodily desires as in the East, we find at the same time less subtlety and idealism—less repose, but more energy—a severer standard of truth and a more *practical* benevolence.

In the East we find abstraction, subtlety, secrecy, and the magical power of the *individual*; in the West we find prayer, a fervid and open boldness with truth, and a spiritual love content with nothing less than the salvation of the whole world.

Moreover, I believe this, that there is in the moral and spiritual progress of the world an evolution, as in the vegetable and animal creation; and with Tennyson I can say that

"I doubt not through the ages an increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of
the suns."

We find that all esoteric and ascetic forms of religion take the same ground regarding the body, namely, that it must be brought under subjection to the soul, and thereby rendered a fitter temple for the rule of the spirit.

In this respect the East seems to me to have a more complete and scientific method than the West, for in the East the method has been systematised after a manner almost unknown in the West, and regarding which no systematic rules are laid down, either by Jesus of Nazareth, or by any of His disciples; although this may perhaps be explained by the fact that no universal and minute rules can be laid down with regard to physical details, for that which might be best in Central India could not be best in London or in Greenland.

When I attempt to describe the Eastern method, I do not pretend to speak with authority as to details, because, as we all know, the innermost details are hidden from all but the initiated, and we, as a society, after one year's connection with the East, have not yet received more than a few fragments of knowledge to be picked up at the threshold.

Broadly stated, however, the occult and ascetic method of the East consists in a life separated from the family ties, and all the anxieties and discords of the world, and in which continual contemplation of God is required.

The devotee must live a life of absolute chastity; he must abstain from the flesh of animals and from all alcohols, and he must practise frequent ablutions.

Having freed his soul from bodily desires and his body from superfluous flesh, he must still further totally abstract himself from the world, and fix his thoughts on the supreme centre; after which, by the practice of retaining the breath, the attainment of which power is progressive, he ultimately obtains the "Internal respiration," and by the final assistance of those who know, he projects his soul into the astral, and thus becoming the *one* internal sense, is as a *unity* at one with God—knowing good and evil, and working as a divine and magical man.

How the adept lives after this stupendous victory, or how he occupies his life, or what his desires and works are, we in the West know very little, except generally.

It is seen, however, that he becomes a magician in the best sense; and so long as he fixes his thoughts on God as the supreme power, and truth, and *love*, he must live a life of abstract if not active goodness.

Having these magical powers, however, he must, unless simple and wise and true and loving, be exposed to terrible temptations; and if "the angels kept not their first estate," but by "ambition, that last infirmity of noble minds," fell, "how can man, then, the (*frail*) image of his Maker, hope to win by it?" Or how shall he escape the fate of that "Lucifer son of the morning" who, aspiring to be as God, was cast out of heaven and fell headlong into the abyss?

But the idea of the adept is most fascinating to the human mind, and to attain to the dignity and power of the magical man is an ambition far transcending all earthly ambition.

The idea of the true adept is one whose powers and knowledge far transcend all merely human power and knowledge, and with him riches and worldly honours, and rank and distinction, are as nothing. But for this very reason the adept, I conceive, must be forever in a critical position.

To subdue our base and worldly and animal

desires is comparatively an easy triumph over matter. Will force is sufficient for that. But this very will force must for ever present the temptation of that self-will, which becomes spiritual tyranny ; and if it be true that the adept controls and uses for his purposes the souls of weaker spirits, how can he escape that penalty which follows all slaveholding ? Must he not sooner or later be compelled to pay the price for work done ? Or "can any man touch pitch and not be defiled ?"

Secrecy as an essential in Eastern adeptship is so far a good, as it is of the nature of that reticence which is so far strength ; but can secrecy be maintained for a lifetime, and be the essence of one's life, and not engender selfishness ?

In certain conditions of society, and for certain ends, secrecy may be essential to safety ; but perhaps the day is beginning to arrive when even with adeptship the rule of absolute secrecy may be relaxed, and it almost seems as if Madame Blavatsky, as editor of the *Theosophist*, were really preparing the way to give us a second and true edition of "*Isis (fully) Unveiled.*"

Another question suggests itself to us as members of the British Theosophical Society. If, as we are told, some of those who practise *yogi* perish from overstrained bodies, while others, becoming entangled in the middle passage, are torn to pieces by the demons of infernal desire, how could we, the pale faces of the West, endure the ordeal ? Unless, indeed, the victory were gained after a long and systematic training of soul and body.

Finally we may ask, granting that magical powers can be obtained by these spiritual athletes, should we of the West, at least, not be in the position of those physical athletes, of whom we know that they ever stand on the verge of dangerous disease ?

But I have already confessed that we know almost nothing of the powers or mode of life followed by the Eastern adept.

Perhaps one may some day appear in our midst and instruct us, although it may be a question whether he could, with advantage to himself, forsake his native soil and air, and, isolated from his brothers, stand before us.

But although we are ignorant, and therefore must speak with discretion regarding the adeptship of the East, we can with knowledge and confidence speak regarding the Christian adeptship of the West, because in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth we find the history of the greatest of all the magicians who ever stood on this planet, because He sought not His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him.

His rule of adeptship is distinctly laid down in words, and was openly and continually manifested in His life and works ; and all who choose may freely enrol themselves as brothers and sisters of His order, while those who begin to live the life will at once begin to know the doctrine ; and those who truly live the life will know the doctrine in its fulness.

Now the rules for Christian adeptship we find fully laid down by the Founder Himself in His Sermon from the Mount.

The historian, after a rapid sketch of the birth and early life of Jesus of Nazareth, suddenly intro-

duces Him as entering on His *public* life as a teacher of righteousness and a worker of miracles.

We find that, if I may use the term, He completed His initiation by going into the wilderness and fasting forty days and forty nights, after which He was "an hungered."

Then, as in Eastern initiation, still following the parallel, He became subject to the test temptations of what is called the devil, but which Easterns and moderns call evil spirits, and thus the narrative proceeds.

"And the tempter came to Him and said : If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said : Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh Him up into the Holy City and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto Him : If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answered and said : It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said unto Him : All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then Jesus answered and said : Get thee behind Me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Hini only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him."

(To be continued.)

THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD OF INVESTIGATING SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA.

MR. CHARLES BLACKBURN, of Parkfield, Didsbury, near Manchester, has sent us for publication the following extracts from a letter arranging a meeting between himself and the late Mr. Serjeant Cox. It was written by the latter, under the date of Sept. 9th, 1879, and sets forth Mr. Serjeant Cox's opinion of the experimental method of investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism. He wrote :—

"It will give me very great pleasure to join your séances for the purpose of purely scientific investigation as you propose.

"Of course it will be impossible to undertake always to attend, for other business claims may occasionally interfere ; but you may rely on my presence, with very rare exceptions.

"I shall be quite willing, with the rest, to attest the results of our investigations.

"Science will be very much indebted to you for the course you are adopting. No real progress can be made until it is taken out of the hands of mere enthusiasts, and examined, as all other sciences are pursued, by careful experiment."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. D. F.—It is necessary that such certificates as to the genuineness and value of mediumship should be publicly attested, not alone by the name, but by the full address of the writer.

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INFORMATION FOR INQUIRERS.

In thirty years Spiritualism has spread through all the most civilised countries on the globe, until it now has tens of thousands of adherents, and about thirty periodicals. It has also outlived the same popular abuse which at the outset opposed railways, gas, and Galileo's discovery of the rotation of the earth.

The Dialectical Society, under the presidency of Sir John Lubbock, appointed a large committee, which for two years investigated the phenomena occurring in the presence of non-professional mediums, and finally reported that the facts were true, that the raps and other noises governed by intelligence were real, and that solid objects sometimes moved in the presence of mediums without being touched.

Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, divisor of the radiometer, and discoverer of the new metal thallium, investigated the phenomena of Spiritualism in his own house, and reported them to be true. Mr. A. R. Wallace, Mr. Cromwell Varley, Prof. Zöllner, and a great number of intelligent professional men have done the same.

HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES AT HOME.

Inquirers into the phenomena of Spiritualism should begin by forming circles in their own homes, with no Spiritualist or stranger to the family present.

The assertions of a few newspapers, conjurers, and men of science that the alleged phenomena are jugglery are proved to be untrue by the fact that manifestations are readily obtained by private families, with no stranger present, and without deception by any member of the family. At the present time there are only about half a dozen professional mediums for the physical phenomena in all Great Britain, consequently, if these were all tricksters (which they are not), they are so few in number as to be unable to bear out the imposture theory as the foundation of the great movement of modern Spiritualism. Readers should protect themselves against any impostors who may tell them that the phenomena are not real, by trying simple home experiments which cost nothing, thus showing how egregiously those are duped who trust in worthless authorities.

One or more persons possessing medial powers without knowing it are to be found in nearly every household, and about one new circle in three, formed according to the following instructions, obtains the phenomena:

1. Let arrangements be made that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle.

2. Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit in subdued light, but sufficient to allow everything to be seen clearly, round an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is of little importance. Any table will do.

3. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an aerid feeling against them is weakening.

4. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature.

5. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first indications will probably be table-tilting or raps.

6. When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion let one person only speak; he should talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean "Yes," one means "No," and two mean "Doubtful," and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three raps be given in answer, then say, "If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?" Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, an from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.

7. Possibly symptoms of other forms of mediumship, such as trance or clairvoyance, may develop; the better class of messages, as judged by their religious and philosophical merits, usually accompany such manifestations rather than the more objective phenomena. After the manifestations are obtained, the observers should not go to the other extreme and give way to an excess of credulity, but should believe no more about them or the contents of messages than they are forced to do by undeniable proof.

8. Should no results be obtained at the first two *séances* because no medium chances to be present, try again with other sitters. A medium is usually an impulsive individual, very sensitive to mesmeric influences.

Mediumship may either be used or abused. Mediums should not lower their strength by sitting more than about twice a week; angular, excitable people, had better avoid the nervous stimulus of mediumship altogether.

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